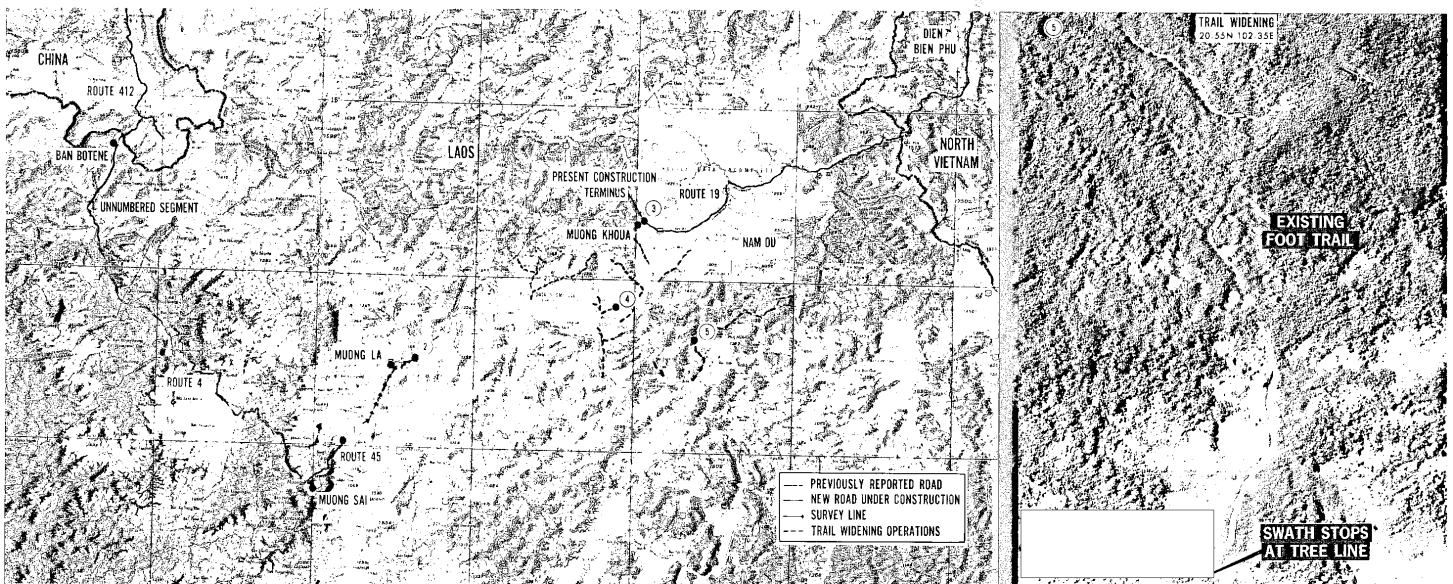
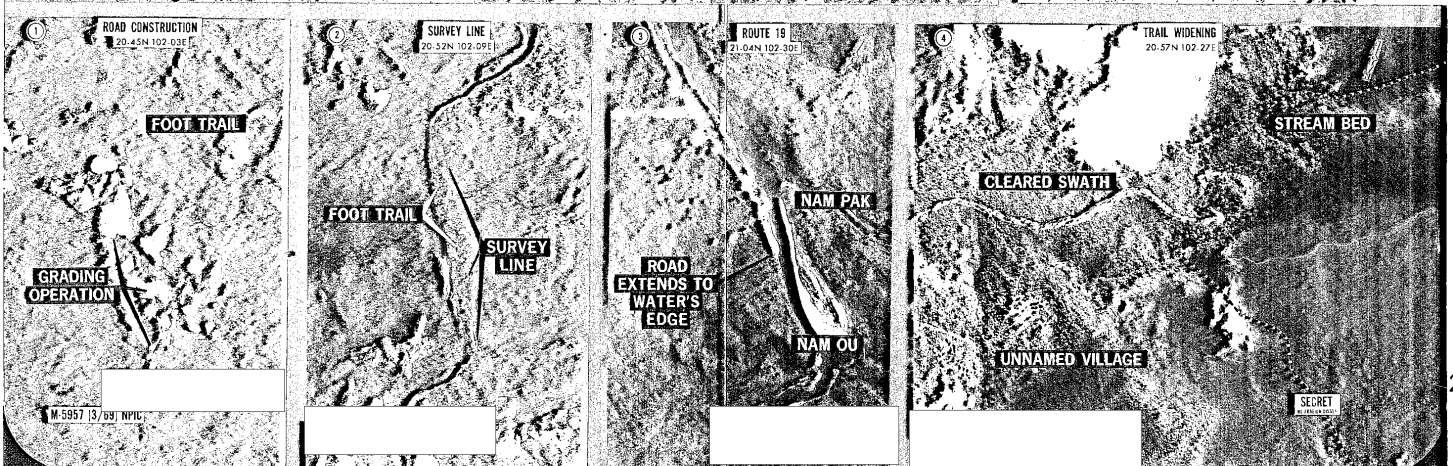




ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND TRAIL ACTIVITY NORTHERN LAOS



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**ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND TRAIL ACTIVITY
NORTHERN LAOS**

1. SIGNIFICANCE:

THIS BOARD DEPICTS CONTINUING ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND TRAIL WIDENING IN THE MUONG SAI AND MUONG KHOUA AREAS OF LAOS.

2. LOCATION:

MUONG SAI AND MUONG KHOUA ARE BOTH LOCATED IN NORTHERN LUANG PRABANG PROVINCE, NORTH CENTRAL LAOS.

3. BACKGROUND:

SINCE LATE LAST YEAR THE CHINESE HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTING A ROAD FROM THE CHINA BORDER NEAR BAN BOTENE, SOUTHEAST TO MUONG SAI. THE TRAIL WIDENING OPERATION NEAR MUANG KHOUA HAS BEEN UNDERWAY SINCE LAST SUMMER.

4. MISSION READOUT:

THE ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTION FROM BAN BOTENE NEAR THE CHINA/LAOS BORDER TO MUONG SAI IS NOW OBSERVED TO EXTEND 6 NM NORTHEAST TO 204535N 1020300E (UTM SH928981). A SURVEY LINE IS ALSO OBSERVED WHICH PASSES THROUGH MUONG LA AND EXTENDS AN ADDITIONAL 11 NM NORTHEAST. THE PRESENT TERMINUS OF THE ROAD CONSTRUCTION IS DEPICTED IN INSET #1 AND A SEGMENT OF THE SURVEY LINE IS SHOWN IN INSET #2.

A POSSIBLY ASSOCIATED TRAIL-WIDENING OPERATION IS LOCATED SOUTH AND WEST OF THE NAM OU RIVER NEAR MUONG KHOUA AND ROUTE 19. THE OPERATION, WHICH APPARENTLY STARTED LAST SUMMER, INCLUDES AT LEAST 56 NM OF TRAIL SWATH WHICH HAS BEEN

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WIDENED. ALTHOUGH IT MAY NOT BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE ROAD CONSTRUCTION OR ROUTE 19, NO INDIGENOUS TRAIL WIDENING OF THIS MAGNITUDE HAS BEEN OBSERVED IN NORTHERN LAOS BY NPIC IN THE PAST. AFTER THE SWATH HAS BEEN WIDENED (BY MEANS OF A CLEARING OPERATION) IT IS APPARENTLY ABANDONED AS NO GRADING HAS BEEN OBSERVED. EXAMPLES OF THIS TRAIL WIDENING ARE DEPICTED ON INSETS 4 AND 5.

THE PRESENT CONSTRUCTION TERMINUS OF ROUTE 19 IS LOCATED ON THE BANK OF THE NAM OU RIVER, ACROSS FROM MUONG KHOUA AT 210452N 1023040E (UTM TJ414329). THIS TERMINUS IS DEPICTED ON INSET #3.

5. REMARKS:

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN NORTHERN LAOS REPORTEDLY BEGAN DURING SEPTEMBER 1968 WITH A CHINESE FORCE NUMBERING BETWEEN 3,000 - 5,000 MEN INCLUDING BOTH WORKERS AND SECURITY FORCES. SOME HEAVY EQUIPMENT INCLUDING PNEUMATIC DRILLS, AT LEAST TEN BULLDOZERS OR TRACTORS, AND ONE MOTORIZED ROLLER HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN THE AREA.

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MAP REFERENCE: JOG 1:250,000 NF 47-12, NF 47-16
NF 48-9, NF 48-13

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